

ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES OF JAPANESE STUDENTS IN
AMERICAN-BASED DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS

A THESIS

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BY

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Overview	2
Chapter 2. Review of Literature.....	4
2.1. Overview	4
2.2 Drum Corps International.....	4
2.3 Acculturation.....	7
2.4 Acculturation Research in Communication Studies.....	16
2.5 Acculturation Among Students	19
2.6 Justification for This Study	21
2.7 Research Questions	22
Chapter 3. Methods.....	23
3.1 Recruitment	23
3.2 Participants	24
3.3 Interviews	24
3.4 Data Analysis	25
3.4.1 Stage One.....	25
3.4.2 Stage Two.	26
3.4.3 Stage Three.	26
Chapter 4. Results	27
4.1 RQ1	27
4.1.1 Familiarity With Others.....	27
4.1.2 Acculturation.	30
4.1.3 Recognition.....	34

4.1.4 Involvement.....	36
4.1.5 Job Competency.	37
4.1.6 Adaptation and Role Negotiation.	39
4.2 RQ2	41
4.2.1 Linguistic Influences on Acculturative Stress	41
4.2.2 Social Support and Acculturative Stress	42
Chapter 5. Discussion	45
5.1 Summary of Findings.....	45
5.1.1 Familiarity with Others.....	45
5.1.2 Acculturation.	46
5.1.3 Recognition.....	46
5.1.4 Job Competency.	47
5.1.5 Adaptation/Role Negotiation.....	47
5.2 Implications	49
5.2.1 Language.	50
5.2.2 Culture Learning.....	53
5.3 Strengths.....	55
5.4 Limitations	56
5.5 Future Directions.....	58
References	60
Endnotes	75
Appendices	76

Abstract

THESIS: Acculturation Experiences of Japanese Students in American-Based Drum and Bugle Corps

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The purpose of this study was to explore the dimensions of organizational communication that influence Japanese students' experiences in DCI, and to explore the communication strategies that students use to overcome acculturative stress. Specifically, this study employs two Research Questions: 1) "what organizational communication factors influence the experiences of Japanese students in DCI?" and 2) "what communication strategies do Japanese students in DCI employ to help reduce acculturative stress?" Using the work of Myers and Oetzel (2003) as a framework for understanding organizational assimilation, this study seeks to better understand Japanese students' experience in DCI and to suggest pragmatic steps by which educators can improve these students' experiences.

Keywords: acculturation, organizational assimilation, intercultural organizations, acculturative stress

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

In the summer of 2015, while marching with the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps, I was given the opportunity to act as a “big brother” to a Japanese student in the organization. Each year when new members are initiated into the organization, they are given their corps necklace; a special piece of jewelry that denotes organizational members; by a veteran member. Veterans are able to choose their rookies, and I chose my student immediately. Because I was working to learn Japanese, we had developed a strong relationship in the early days of the summer. The day of initiation, I worked during my lunch break to write a note in Japanese welcoming her to the organization. That evening, when I presented her with her dog tags and the note, she told me how much it meant to her that somebody in the United States wanted to understand her culture and to be her friend. The importance of that single relationship stuck with me through the remainder of my time in the organization, and has inspired my pedagogy, as well as this research.

Introduction

The process of acculturation was first defined as occurring “when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149). While early works in acculturation primarily studied the experiences of immigrants assimilating to a new culture (Chance, 1965; Gordon, 1964; Spindler & Spindler, 1967), more recent works have moved toward exploring more specific acculturation scenarios, such as acculturation into a new religious group (Berry, 1992), acculturation into higher education (Elliot, Baumfield, & Reid, 2016; Zhang & Goodson, 2011), and acculturation into new family units (Cushner, 1989).

Despite this vast and diverse body of work, there is no acculturation research on the specific experiences of students in Drum and Bugle Corps.¹

Drum and Bugle Corps (Drum Corps) is an international youth performance activity that is similar to marching band. Unlike the average marching band, however, Drum Corps are independent youth programs without association to a specific high school or university. Rather, each country has its own oversight body and independent groups, such as Drum Corps Japan, Drum Corps Europe, and Drum Corps International (DCI) in the United States. Each group within DCI is comprised of up to 150 students who come from around the world to audition for a chance to perform in front of audiences across the United States during a three-month national tour, which culminates in the World Championships, a performance before a crowd of over 23,000 spectators (Nash, 2017).

Many Japanese students compete for the opportunity to perform in the United States, spending considerable financial, logistic, and time resources to merely audition. In fact, the prospect of performing in DCI is so popular in Japan that seven-time world champion DCI group *The Cavaliers* recently announced that they will be hosting an audition in Nagoya, Japan (“Cavaliers 2018 Audition Experience”). Despite the continued growth of DCI (Nash, 2017), as well as the continued growth of the Japanese contingent in the activity, no research has been done on these students’ experiences.

Overview

Chapter two contains a literature review that informs the content of the study. It looks first to the existing research on DCI, then to the broad history of acculturation research, before narrowing to acculturation research within communication studies, and finally looking at acculturation by students within educational settings. Chapter three discusses the methods used

in this work. This study employs semi-structured interviews to examine the acculturation experiences of Japanese students in DCI. These interviews were structured based on the work of Myers and Oetzel (2003), but designed to allow flexibility on the part of participants. Chapter four discusses the results of these interviews in two ways. First, this study uses Myers & Oetzel's (2003) framework to explore the factors that influence Japanese students' acculturation in DCI. Second, this work discusses the strategies that Japanese students use to reduce acculturative stress in these scenarios. Finally, chapter five acknowledges ways in which this study lays the groundwork for steps that educators can take to improve international students' experiences in DCI. The chapter then looks to the strengths and limitations of the study before finally discussing some possible directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature that shapes this study, looking first at the history of DCI, then reviewing acculturation research with a particular focus on acculturation in higher education before showing how acculturation has been studied in the communication studies discipline. Finally, this chapter articulates the research questions (RQs) that guide this study.

Drum Corps International

Competitive Drum Corps has been a popular youth activity since around the end of World War I. Upon returning from the war, many individuals who had participated in ceremonial marching units during their military careers found that they felt some nostalgia for the pomp and circumstance of the Drum Corps, and decided to start competitive marching leagues around the United States. These military-style competitive units were generally local and included youth from particular geographic areas, school districts, religious institutions, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFA) posts, or American Legion posts (D. Richardson, personal communication, May 2017). In 1971, these local Corps began to form regional alliances in the Midwest and Eastern regions of the United States, which led to the creation of oversight bodies for those regions. These oversight bodies were called the *Midwest Combine* and the *Eastern Alliance* (Boo, 2004). Each of these oversight bodies contained five Corps, and they worked together to ensure economic and competitive success for all involved. In 1972, the *Midwest Combine* and the *Eastern Alliance* came together to form the national oversight body *Drum Corps International* (Boo, 2004).

The modern-day Drum Corps activity differs significantly from the old days of military-style formations and performances. Today, Drum Corps is a performance art, complete with detailed costuming, dance, music, and of course, marching. This more modern activity calls for students to excel as both athletes and musicians. This drive towards excellence has resulted in most Corps moving from regional membership to national and even global membership (D. Richardson, personal communication, May 2017). Every year, dozens of Japanese students travel to the United States to audition for one of DCI's member corps, and spend their summer immersed in the culture of DCI, as well as the culture of the United States. No information is currently available on when Japanese members began to travel to the United States to participate in DCI. However, involvement in the activity by Japanese groups dates back at least 25 years, when the first Japanese group competed at the 1992 World Championships under the title *SGI Fuji*. (D. Richardson, personal communication, May 2017).

The existing scholarly literature on DCI is limited, containing work from the disciplines of music, psychology, medicine, and only one article from the communication discipline. I will review this work briefly to acquaint the reader with the scholarly work that has been devoted to the activity. Within the music discipline, there is one scholarly article (Odello, 2015) that focuses on DCI.² Specifically, Odello (2015) examined how self-referential performances within DCI create an in-group and an out-group, creating meaningful performances to individuals within the community, but leaving out potential new members. Odello found that disagreement throughout the DCI community regarding the importance of tradition led to performances becoming political statements for the in-group of DCI members and staff, leaving the audience out of a central part of the performance.

Psychological and medical research about DCI is more robust. For example, Levy, Lounsbury, and Kent (2009) examined the relationship between psychological and physical health factors in DCI members. Specifically, these authors performed a quantitative analysis comparing the “big five” personality traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and openness) to self-reporting of injuries during the competitive season. The authors found statistically significant relationships between an individual’s personality type and their willingness to disclose injuries. Following this work, Levy and his colleagues published work that explored performance anxiety specifically within marching arts activities (Levy, Castille, & Farley, 2011; Levy & Lounsbury, 2011). While Levy, Castille, and Farley (2011) broadly explored performance anxiety and discussed self-reports of performance anxiety symptoms as they relate to various demographic factors, Levy and Lounsbury (2011) examined the relationship between performance anxiety and the previously mentioned “big five” personality traits. Both of these works found statistically significant relationships between performance anxiety and demographics, as well as between performance anxiety and dominant personality types. Most recently, Levy, Statham, and Van Doren (2013) discussed the trend of weight loss during the competitive season, comparing students’ body mass index at the beginning of the competitive season, the end of the season, and at the beginning of the next season. Levy et al., found that students tend to lose weight during the summer, but gain much of that weight back during the off-season. The authors sought to understand this trend in order to contribute to the longitudinal health of DCI participants.

In the field of Communication Studies there is a single article that focuses on DCI. Specifically, Cortland and Mandelbaum (2011) examined the communication processes and cultural formation of bus life in DCI. During the competitive season, members travel the country

on coach buses. Because the members live on these buses, the culture on these buses and the setting of rules are important to creating a cohesive living environment. Further, Cortland and Mandelbaum argued that understanding formal rule-setting rituals is key to understanding the culture of the activity, because it provides insights about the way that communication in DCI differs from that of other groups. Specifically, Cortland and Mandelbaum (2011) discussed the ways that members in DCI tend to explicate their rituals to new members in order to help them acculturate more effectively and efficiently into the group.

This research provides important insights for communication scholars who are interested in the construction of organizational culture and acculturation processes, particularly within DCI. However, there are two ways in which this work leaves room for further exploration of acculturation and communication in DCI. First, while Cortland and Mandelbaum (2011) discuss the formal communication practice of explicating rituals and setting rules, they do not focus on informal communication.³ According to Khan (1992), formal communication occurs within formal relationships, which refers to the shared membership and participation in an organization between the host and the sojourner, while informal communication takes place within informal relationship contexts such as friendship. Khan (1992) argued that it is necessary to understand both formal and informal forms of communication relationships, as individuals maximize their potential for acculturation through a combination of the two.

Acculturation

The following section provides an overview of acculturation theory and research before looking more specifically at communication studies research addressing acculturation and the acculturation experiences of students.

Research on interactions between cultures dates back to Halkett (1825), who discussed the colonization and attempted conversion of native peoples in the United States, but focused exclusively on the ways that native persons either did or did not adopt dominant culture from settlers. However, the concept was not formally defined until the work of Redfield et al. (1936), who defined acculturation as “phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups.” (p. 149). Redfield et. al adopted a multilateral view of acculturation to explore not only how native peoples adopt dominant cultures, but also to understand how they may have maintained their own cultures, or even influenced the development of the dominant culture. Redfield et. al also noted the importance of acculturation through methods other than assimilation, suggesting that a group can acculturate and change their own cultural patterns without being erased and becoming absorbed by the dominant culture.

Two decades later a new definition of acculturation was published by the Social Science Research Council (1954), which expanded the boundaries of acculturation, and further clarified the potential outcomes of acculturation. In this work, acculturation was defined as:

Culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors. (p. 974)

This definition differed from Redfield et. al (1936) in that it specified the autonomy of the non-dominant culture, and rhetorically provided equal power to both cultures. Additionally, this definition provided important detail on what factors construct acculturation, such as aspects of personality and value systems. This more comprehensive definition inspired the first of many

explosions in acculturation research, which helped acculturation move from a strictly anthropological field to a nearly universal one, with research in linguistics (Casagrande, 1954), economics (Redfield & Singer, 1954), and psychology (Benedict & Jacks, 1954), among others.

In 1964, acculturation research moved from a largely pragmatic focus into another developmental phase, in which researchers began to question the theoretical constructs of acculturation, and began developing models to explain these processes. The first of these major redefinitions came from the work of Gordon (1964) in which he argued that the final goal of acculturation is assimilation, outlining a seven-step process by which non-dominant cultures can “ascend” to become proper, assimilated people. This unilateral view, though oppositional to already existing models of acculturation, gained purchase in the scholarly community. Some notable works which support the unilateral model include Spindler and Spindler’s (1967) argument that all acculturation passes from a savage or native state, through a transitional state, and enters an elite acculturated or assimilated state; and Chance’s (1965) work, which suggested that acculturation is a response to negative stimuli that affect those who refuse to assimilate to a dominant culture.

Despite Gordon’s (1964) movement towards simplified and unilateral models of acculturation, much of the work in this period examined acculturation in an increasingly complex way. Leading this charge were Graves (1967), and Berry (1970). Graves (1967) argued for the concept of psychological acculturation, suggesting that researchers should look toward the changes that happen in individuals as a result of culture contact,⁴ rather than seeking only to understand acculturation on a macro level. Graves (1967) outlined three details which determine the likelihood for a member of a non-dominant group to choose to assimilate to the dominant group: formal education, association with the dominant group, and socioeconomic status. In

other words, the more educated the individual, the more the individual associates with members of the dominant group, and the higher the individual's economic status, the more likely they are to choose assimilation as an acculturation strategy.

Another development in 1967 came from Mexican scholar Rogelio Diaz-Guerrero (1967), who argued that Anglo-Americans and native peoples have different methods of coping with cultural contact. He suggested that while a dominant group can cope passively with stress related to acculturation, often ignoring the stress while assimilation occurs, a non-dominant group is constantly made aware of their position as outsiders, forcing these individuals to adopt active coping strategies, which take more effort and emotional labor, creating an inherent disadvantage for non-dominant groups.

In response to Graves' (1967) arguments, Berry and his associates published a number of works in 1970. First, Sommerlad and Berry (1970) problematized Graves' (1967) work, suggesting that while his focus is more complex than that of Gordon (1964), it still places too much stock in the unilateral process of the non-dominant individual becoming a part of the dominant culture. Instead, Sommerlad and Berry (1970) suggested that acculturation includes a tension between assimilation and separation, with individuals from both the dominant and non-dominant cultures having their own individual ideas on how to manage the tensions wrought by culture contact.

In the same work, Berry (1970) argued for the impact of relational attitudes on the acculturation process, expanding on Graves' (1967) tenant of association with or alienation from the dominant group (p. 314). Finally, Berry (1970) claimed that regardless of an individual's culture, one will always prioritize members of their group over members of another group, which often creates tension between groups in culture contact situations.

In 1974, Berry and his colleagues wrote on other developments in acculturation theories. Chief among these is Berry and Annis' (1974) "ecological-cultural-behavioral model," which discussed the role of environment in acculturation behavior. Berry (1974) also explored the role of dominant group attitudes on non-dominant group acculturation. He argued that the opinions of the dominant group create the situation in which non-dominant groups acculturate, allowing them to either merge their cultures peacefully (melting pot), be forced to assimilate (pressure cooker), or to keep their cultures separate, whether peacefully (segregation) or by force (ethnocide) (Berry, 1974). This concept further complicated the relationship between non-dominant and dominant group identities, and increased the complexity of existing acculturation theory.

During this time, a few major anthropological works on acculturation were also published. These works generally took a more group-focused approach, were grounded in observation rather than theorizing, and focused on understanding the ways that cultures have historically acculturated, rather than seeking to create new models. One work in particular utilized scientific experimentation to support the existence of a relationship between acculturation and assimilation (Teske & Nelson, 1974). By applying contemporary models to these historical discoveries, these works provided support for the basic theories presented by Berry (1970) and Graves (1967).

Another change in the development of acculturation models occurred when Berry, Kalin, and Taylor (1977) published research on the attitudes of dominant groups in culture contact situations. While previous research often acknowledged the dominant group as a participant, the focus of psychological acculturation was largely on the non-dominant group members (Graves, 1967). The work of Berry et. al (1977) helped to reshape the position of researchers in

understanding acculturation, placing increased focus on the importance of understanding attitudes from both non-dominant and dominant group members, echoing and strengthening the arguments of Berry's (1974) earlier works. This focus on dominant group identity was later explored through the work of Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997), and Montreuil and Bourhis (2001).

The 1980s brought a new wave of developments for acculturation research, beginning with the works of Padilla (1980a, 1980b). First, Padilla (1980a) problematized existing research, arguing that scholars are too focused on the relationship between ethnocultural groups, rather than discussing the tensions that arise within these groups. Following this logic, Padilla (1980b) suggested a bidimensional model of acculturation arranged on scales of loyalty to one's original ethnicity and awareness of the other culture.

It was during this time that one of the most influential works in acculturation research was published: Berry's "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation" (1980). In this work, Berry first presented the fourfold model of acculturation, which frames much of our contemporary understanding of acculturation. The fourfold model defines the following four categories, which Berry (1980) argued represent all possible outcomes of a culture contact situation between a dominant and non-dominant culture: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Each of these terms expresses the degree to which an individual wishes to interact with the dominant culture. In *assimilation*, individuals desire contact with the host culture at the expense of losing their native culture. *Integration* occurs when individuals desire contact with the host culture but choose to maintain their culture as well. *Separation* occurs when an individual prefers low contact with the host culture and high contact with their own culture, and finally *marginalization* is when an individual prefers low contact with both the host and native cultures.

The fourfold model has become dominant in acculturation research, and has been used as the backbone of research by many authors (e.g., Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Mendoza, 1984; Trimble, 1989).

Following Berry's (1980) development of the fourfold model, scholars began to elaborate on this multidimensional schema. For example, Mendoza (1984) suggested that a composite index would hold more real-world application than an aggregated index, arguing that an individual can adopt different strategies in different parts of their acculturative journey. For example, Mendoza (1984) argued that an individual can choose to assimilate in one cultural practice, separate in another, and be integrated in a third. Similar expansions were made by a number of authors, including elaboration on the importance of individual and cultural attitudes on the methods of acculturation (Berry, 1984), extended paradigms for exploring the relationship between stress and adaptation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and distinguishing types of coping mechanisms within acculturative adaptation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Three years later, Mendoza (1989) published another work, which augmented Berry's (1980) fourfold model by adding the concept of "acculturation transmutation." In this work, Mendoza (1989) suggested that in addition to the four options of Berry's (1980) model, individuals can also *transmutate*, or create a third culture which draws from aspects of both the dominant and non-dominant cultures.

In 1986, Berry, Trimble, and Olmedo called for researchers to examine acculturation on a macro-psychological or micro-cultural level. In response, researchers conducted studies in such areas as changes in the dominant culture because of culture contact (Richman, Gavidia, Flaherty, Birz, & Wintrob, 1987) and overall fluctuations in mental health between dominant and non-dominant cultures (Berry & Kim, 1988; Schmitz, 1992).

The next development in acculturation research came from Trimble in 1989, and shaped the development of the field until the present day. Trimble's work first problematized the existing literature, suggesting that in an effort to understand acculturation processes, researchers have oversimplified them. Thus, Trimble argued for the use of acculturation models to explore situations other than immigration and colonialism. For the first time since the beginning of acculturation research, researchers began to explore contexts beyond individuals moving to new countries, instead exploring how individuals experience acculturation when moving to new jobs, new schools, or even new marriages. This concept, called situational acculturation, forms the backbone of contemporary acculturation research (Trimble, 1989). Although research has been conducted since 1990 on more traditional topics such as immigration (Ho, 1995; Hyman, Vu, & Beiser, 2000; Lalonde & Cameron, 1993; Sodowsky, Lai, & Plake, 1991), a body of research has been developed around specific concepts such as psychological adaptations (Searle & Ward, 1990), biculturalism in families (Root, 1992), and classroom acculturation (Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008).

The 1990s placed a particular focus on observing the experiences of individuals in acculturation processes. These detail-oriented works examined daily living in intercultural communities (Searle & Ward, 1990), defined new coping methods for those dealing with acculturative stress (Endler & Parker, 1990), and compared psychological and sociocultural forms of adaptation (Schmitz, 1992; Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1993a; Ward & Kennedy, 1993b). However, the most common focus of acculturation research during this time was on individual identity and identity-forming within cultural conflict situations (Berry, 1999). Scholars in this area developed models for self-identification (Phinney, 1990), constructed a two-dimensional identity model comparing individual and collective

identity (Camilleri, 1990; Camilleri, 1991), and explored the influence of self-esteem on likelihood of assimilation (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992).

Another major development came in 1992, when Berry (1992) advanced the concepts of *culture shedding*, *culture learning*, and *culture conflict*. Culture shedding and learning include the removal of one's native culture (shedding) and replacing it with another culture (learning). This differed from the previously existing model of assimilation in that it allowed space for Mendoza's (1989) concept of *transmutation*. While the previous model of assimilation treated shedding and learning as one step, in which an individual replaces their culture with another, Berry's (1992) new model treated shedding and learning as separate steps, suggesting that any number of cultures, even a transmuted culture, can fill the gap of a culture that has been shed. The last of these concepts, culture conflict, describes situations in which shedding and learning are made difficult or impossible due to various cultural factors (Berry, 1992). For example, if an individual chooses to renounce their Christian faith in favor of Islam when they migrate to a Middle Eastern country, they would be shedding their culture and learning the new culture. However, if the person has tattoos, they may be rejected by more traditional Islamic sects, a conflict caused by a difference in cultural taboos between their old Christian religion and new Islamic religion. Berry's (1992) work led to the later coining of the term "acculturative adjustment," or an action that individuals take to minimize culture conflict and maximize potential for culture learning.

Despite the focus on the experiences of members of non-dominant cultures during this time, many researchers still opted to focus on the views of dominant groups in culture contact situations (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Bourhis et. al, 1997; Piontkowski, Florack, & Hoelker, 2000). In these works, scholars argued that although recent research had been rightfully focused on the

marginalized voices in acculturation, this focus was limiting the academic understanding of these processes. Therefore, many authors urged a return to more bidirectional and comprehensive views of acculturation.

Acculturation Research in Communication Studies

In 1977, Y. Kim set out to address the lack of communication research in acculturation, arguing that “Communication scholars have traditionally tended to ignore the communication aspects of acculturation” (p. 66). Y. Kim developed a theoretical model of the relationship between communication and acculturation, ultimately concluding that “language fluency, acculturation motivation, and channel accessibility (interpersonal interaction potential and mass media availability) are major determinants of one’s intercultural communication behaviors” (p. 75) and that “educational background, sex, length of stay in the host society, and age at the time of immigration are the most important factors in predicting the immigrant’s language competence, acculturation motivation, and accessibility to host communication channels” (p. 75). These findings stand as the fundamental assumptions of the role of communication in acculturation even in contemporary research. Later, Y. Kim (1980) expanded on this work, reorganizing these concepts into four categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, mass-mediated communication, and communication environment.

Following in Y. Kim’s footsteps, J. Kim (1980) used empirical tests to gauge the validity of some existing models of acculturation communication. As J. Kim (1980) wrote, “The conceptual linkage between communication and acculturation has long been accepted by anthropologists and sociologists . . . The linkage between the two concepts, however, has scarcely been taken beyond the conceptual stage . . .” (p. 155). Considering this, J. Kim (1980) sought to find a link between communication and acculturation, suggesting that

“communication . . . is a major determinant of the acculturation level a foreign immigrant achieves” (p. 176). In the following years, a number of works adopted J. Kim’s (1980) project, using empirical approaches to study the relationship between communication and acculturation. These works discussed the differences in communication patterns between communities (Choi & Tamborini, 1988), the role of communication in developing relationships within communities (Regis, 1989), and the impact of linguistics in acculturation communication (Haarmann, 1990).

The next development in acculturation and communication studies came from Kim and Gudykunst (1988). This work presented a number of unique takes on existing acculturation theories, suggesting that adaptation is a lifetime goal which individuals can achieve through small steps of adaptation and that learning the communication patterns of the dominant group plays a major part in informing these adaptations (Kim & Gudykunst, 1988). Kim and Gudykunst (1988) coined these arguments “integrative communication theory.” While this work has been dismissed as problematic by other scholars in the field because of the suggestion that shedding one’s culture in favor of the dominant culture is intrinsically preferable, and that immigrants are required to unlearn their culture in favor of the communication practices of the dominant culture (Berry, 2003), it still represents an important turn in the direction of research, as it opened the doors for later communication research in acculturation to take place. For example, Kramer (1997) explored the role of culture as a form of communication, with a focus on increasing individualism in modern culture, discussing types of communication in acculturation, and observing the role of linguistics in acculturation processes. Kramer argued that all cultures are intrinsically multicultural, and that there is no such thing as a singular culture. Kramer also asserted that individuals within a culture define their identity differently due to differences in communication patterns, and that these differences are proof that monoculture is a

myth used to encourage separation of cultures. More recently, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) coined “intercultural adaptation theory” in a work which explored the specific ways that individuals adapt to one another in order to both save face and encourage comfort in conversational partners despite cultural barriers.

Another important theoretical development linked acculturation theory with organizational structures. In the first work on acculturation in organizations, Jablin (2001) defined *organizational assimilation* as “the processes by which individuals become integrated into the culture of an organization” (p. 755). In response, Myers and Oetzel (2003) suggested that organizational assimilation is measurable, then designed and validated a sixfold measure of organizational assimilation. The six dimensions that make up this measure are: *familiarity with others (familiarity)*, referring to interpersonal relationships with coworkers; *acculturation*, or learning about and accepting the culture of an organization; *recognition*, or the feeling that one is considered valuable by their coworkers; *involvement*, specifically referring to an employee’s involvement beyond their job description, suggesting that extra voluntary involvement will increase acculturation success; *job competency (competency)*, or the feeling that one is successful at their job; and *adaptation/role negotiation*, which suggests that individuals must navigate differences between their expectations and the reality of an organization. Myers and Oetzel argued that these six dimensions have direct influence on the overall quality of an individual’s acculturation success, as well as the success of the organization.

While there have not been many theoretical developments since 2003, there has been extensive work done in the 21st century on the role of communication in situational acculturation. These works have observed the impact of the internet and mediated communication on acculturation processes (Clément, Baker, Josephson, & Noels, 2005; Cox,

2004; Cui, Huaiting, Ma, & Southwell, 2004; Melkote & Liu, 2000), performed ethnographic analyses of acculturation within multicultural communities (Lu, 2001), and examined the specific acculturation processes that present themselves in interpersonal communication (Khan, 2005; Ye, 2006).

Acculturation Among Students

Given that the participants in this study are also students, and that DCI has an explicit educational focus (“About Drum Corps International - Mission Statement”), it is instructive to understand the specific acculturation experiences faced by students in academic settings.

Many contemporary works on student acculturation generally observe the effects of acculturative stress. Acculturative stress or culture shock was first introduced in the work of Oberg (1960) and refers to the personal stress, anxiety, or other negative impacts that arise when an individual is faced with an unfamiliar cultural situation. Acculturative stress is an important marker of student success, as it can help predict if students are willing to seek help for their academic and mental health concerns (Tung, 2011), and often relates to academic achievement (Ho, Schweitzer, & Khawaja, 2017; Zychinski & Polo, 2012). While there is some research that focuses on the impacts of acculturative stress on student performance and experience (Liu et. al, 2016; Toshitaka & Laird, 2014; Yan & Fitzpatrick, 2016), many studies focus on external factors that increase or mitigate acculturative stress.

One of these influencing factors is social support. Social support can encompass everything from parental involvement in younger students’ education (Bhargava, Bamaca-Colbert, Witherspoon, Pomerantz, & Robins, 2017) to a student’s attachment to their professors (Han, Pistole, & Caldwell, 2017), to relationships with their peers (Bertram, Poulakis, Elasser, & Kumar, 2014; Yang, Orrego Dunleavy, & Phillips, 2016). Overwhelmingly, research has found

that positive social support relationships with family, friends, and professors lead to increased academic success among students encountering a new culture, as well as a decrease in acculturative stress (Ho, Schweitzer, & Khawaja, 2017; Khan Abrar uz Zama & Hasan, 2016; Ra & Trusty, 2017; Renner, Laireiter, & Maier, 2012).

Another factor that influences how students acculturate is linguistic ability. Studies have found a consistent relationship between a student's ability to speak their host country's primary language and levels of acculturative stress (Cervantes & Cordova, 2011; Diwan, 2008; Gallagher, 2013; Lowinger, He, Lin, & Chang, 2014). Interestingly, these studies generally find that *perceived* linguistic ability is as influential as *actual* linguistic ability. In other words, if a student has relatively high scores on language tests, but believes that they are struggling with language, they will have similar acculturative stress to individuals who score lower in testing. Other research in linguistics explores the role of social media in language learning and academic acculturation (Peeters & Fourie, 2016), the experiences of second language students in university systems (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Wolski, 2011), and the influence of intercultural contact on language-learning motivation (Kormos, Csizer, & Iwaniec, 2014). These works take a more pedagogical approach to language and acculturation, exploring the unique ways in which exchange students deal with acculturative stress as a result of their language learning goals, and discussing how educators can help to include students from outside cultures in classroom settings.

Two more influencing factors are social interaction and ethnicity. While these factors have been studied with less intensity than linguistics and social support, their findings are significant for understanding students' acculturative stressors. First, researchers have found that social interaction beyond social support is important to reducing acculturative stress.

Specifically, Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, and Al-Timimi (2004) found that individuals are more likely to feel less acculturative stress if they interact more with individuals from another culture, while those who only interact with their own cultural group will likely feel more isolated and therefore feel more acculturative stress. Despite this, researchers have found that individuals in acculturation situations tend to form relationships within their ethnic group more often than they form relationships with individuals of other ethnicities (Lim & Pham, 2016).

Regarding ethnicity and discrimination, Constantine, Okazaki, and Utsey (2004) found that individuals from African countries are more likely to face explicit discrimination, and therefore more likely to isolate themselves and feel acculturative stress than those from Hispanic or Eastern origins. Similarly, Gong (2007) found that Asian students tend to identify more with White students than African students, making assimilation easier for students from Asian cultures and contributing to the acculturative stress of African students.

Justification for This Study

This study examines the acculturation experiences of Japanese students in DCI. In this study, I first use the work of Myers and Oetzel (2003) as a framework to explore the factors that influence Japanese students' acculturation in DCI. Next, I discuss the strategies that Japanese students use to reduce acculturative stress in these scenarios. Finally, I use these findings to suggest pragmatic steps for educators to improve Japanese students' experiences in DCI.

Considering these goals, there are two distinct ways in which this study contributes to the academic research base. First, this study contributes to the current literature base on DCI, which is limited both in quantity and disciplinary scope. Not only is there very little research on the topic, but with the exception of one article from the communication studies discipline, the existing research is primarily in sociological and psychological fields (Levy et al., 2011; Levy

and Lounsbury, 2011; Levy et al., 2009). This study will provide insight to the growing trend of international student participation in DCI from a communication perspective, focusing on the ways that Japanese students acculturate to DCI as an organization. This provides both academic precedent for future communication research in the performing arts, as well as pragmatic precedent for understanding these students and how to improve their experiences in the activity.

Second, this study plays an important role in expanding contemporary acculturation research. In the past few years, a large portion of acculturation research has studied the experiences of students who move to the United States to attend college, often focusing on students from Eastern countries. While this research has contributed to a scholarly understanding of these students' experiences, the focus on academic acculturation has limited research on less-traditional learning contexts, such as DCI. Because DCI is both educational and professional in nature, and Japanese students are simultaneously learning the organizational culture of DCI and the culture of the United States, these students' experiences are unique within the field of acculturation. By studying these unique acculturation experiences through the lens of Myers and Oetzel's (2003) work, and observing the ways that Japanese students navigate acculturation in this unique context, this work helps to expand existing acculturation research into less-traditional contexts.

Research Questions

In order to better understand the unique acculturation experiences and challenges faced by Japanese students in DCI, I pose the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What organizational communication factors influence the experiences of Japanese students in DCI?

RQ2: What communication strategies do Japanese students in DCI employ to help reduce acculturative stress?

Chapter Three: Methods

Recruitment

First, I contacted the directors of the 49 Corps that make up DCI via email with a recruitment letter (Appendix A). This letter requested that the director share my contact information with their Japanese members, (past and present), who may be interested in participating and encourage these individuals to contact me via email. In addition to contacting these directors, I personally contacted Japanese peers whom I know through my participation in DCI. These individuals were sent a standard recruitment letter (Appendix B). Finally, I sent this individual recruitment letter through social media, encouraging potential participants to contact me via email and to share the recruitment letter on their own social media.

Individuals who contacted me in response to these letters were sent a link to a Qualtrics survey. This survey (Appendix C) included demographic information relevant to the study, as well as questions about inclusion criteria (English language proficiency limited professional or higher, minimum 18 years of age, and a current member or alumnus of DCI), and a prompt requesting that individuals provide my contact information to any others who may want to participate. Participants provided their email on this intake survey. Individuals who did not fit the inclusion criteria were thanked for their participation, and their data were subsequently destroyed.

Individuals who fit the inclusion criteria were then asked to set up a date and time for an interview. These interviews took between 60 and 90 minutes, and followed the interview protocol provided (Appendix D). These interviews were conducted over Facebook, Skype, or Discord (all video chat services), and were recorded for transcription. Recordings were deleted upon completion of transcription.

Participants

Of the 155 responses that I received on the intake survey, 23 participants indicated that they would be comfortable participating in an interview conducted in English. Of these 23 participants, six responded to follow-up emails, signed the IRB-approved consent forms (Appendices E and F), and ultimately scheduled interviews. These six participants came from diverse experiences within DCI and the marching arts. Some had performed in competitive groups in Japan, while some had only marched with their high school band. One participant performed in DCI for four years with the same Corps, while another performed only one year, and another performed one year each with two different Corps. Of these participants, there were 4 women and 2 men. Individual participants are described in detail in Table 1.

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Years in DCI</u>	<u># of Corps</u>	<u>Perceived English Ability⁵</u>
Niko	25	Female	4	1	High Intermediate
Kaito	23	Male	1	1	Middle Novice
Yukina	21	Female	3	1	Middle Advanced
Hana	20	Female	1	1	Middle Novice
Reo	22	Male	2	1	Low Intermediate
Himari	21	Female	3	2	High Intermediate

Interviews

For this study, I used a form of ethnographic interviewing or semi-structured interviewing (Bernard, 2006; Tracy, 2013). While these interviews were structured in the sense that they followed a protocol, the protocol was intended to be fluid and encourage participants to open up and speak beyond the prompts I provided. This fluid methodology creates a more

organic and rapport-focused interview process, which is aimed at creating a deeper and more intimate analysis in the final product (Douglas, 1985; Kvale, 1996). Additionally, this method allowed me to ask questions focused on the communication processes that are present in existing research (e.g., Myers and Oetzel's model of organizational assimilation) while simultaneously encouraging participants to present their own concerns and areas that they felt were primary to their acculturation experience.

This interview protocol used the framework of Myers and Oetzel (2003) to center research around the communication processes present in organizational acculturation. Specifically, these interviews addressed five of Myers and Oetzel's six factors of organizational assimilation (familiarity, acculturation, recognition, involvement, competency, and role negotiation). In these interviews, the involvement factor was left out because this factor seeks to understand how acculturation is affected by members' willingness to take on extra work. The strict schedule and culture of DCI does not allow many opportunities to take on extra work,⁶ therefore this factor has been left out of the interview protocol.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was separated into three stages: initial transcription, structured coding of RQ1, and open coding of RQ2.

Stage One. Audio recordings from six participants' interview were transcribed, yielding 74 pages of transcripts. The audio recordings and typed transcripts were held on my home computer under password protection. Paper copies of the transcripts were locked in a drawer in my room with numeric code access. Once the study is completed, paper transcripts will be destroyed, and audio files will be deleted.

Stage Two. First, I examined the transcripts to answer RQ1. For this question, I used Myers and Oetzel's (2003) work as a model. To this end, I viewed the transcripts through the lens of Myers and Oetzel's work, searching for participant responses that spoke to the five of Myers and Oetzel's six categories of organizational assimilation that I chose to observe for this study. I separated participants' responses into five separate documents, one for each of these five categories, and any relevant responses were sorted into the most appropriate category or categories. Many comments fit into more than one of Myers and Oetzel's categories. These responses were placed on multiple documents. I then color-coded these documents to point out instances of crossover between categories.

Stage Three. After analyzing the transcripts for RQ1, I moved to analysis for RQ2, wherein I used an *open coding method*. An open coding method involves identifying similar words, phrases, or stories and grouping them together into broader conceptual themes. From this open coding method, I found two major themes that applied to RQ2: *language* and *social support*. As with RQ1, these themes were then separated into their own documents, and participant responses were organized into these two documents accordingly.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the dimensions of organizational communication that influence Japanese students' experiences in DCI, and to explore the communication strategies that students use to overcome acculturative stress. Specifically, I asked two RQS: 1) "what organizational communication factors influence the experiences of Japanese students in DCI?" and 2) "what communication strategies do Japanese students in DCI employ to help reduce acculturative stress?"

RQ1

To answer my first RQ, I will use the dimensions of organizational assimilation posited by Myers and Oetzel (2003). Recall from chapters two and three that Myers and Oetzel presented six dimensions of organizational communication which influence the organizational assimilation experiences of new organizational members. These six dimensions are: familiarity, acculturation, recognition, involvement, competency, and adaptation/role negotiation. Each of these dimensions influences how likely an individual is to have a positive experience joining their organization, and how likely they are to experience acculturative stress throughout the organizational assimilation process. The following analysis is based on five of the six dimensions of organizational communication identified by Myers and Oetzel (I have omitted "involvement" as acknowledged in chapter three).

Familiarity with Others. Myers and Oetzel (2003) define familiarity through a series of examples, including "getting to know coworkers . . . feeling comfortable with coworkers . . . learning how to interact with coworkers . . . deriving emotional support from organizational members, and generally feeling a sense of community" (p. 443). As this list suggests, familiarity

describes the ways in which group members develop and maintain interpersonal and group relationships, and how those relationships create a sense of community within the organization.

Within the organizational culture of DCI's member corps, participants expressed concerns that language barriers limited their potential to develop familiarity with others. However, through social support from peers as well as organizational intervention, individuals were able to overcome this barrier and develop a positive sense of familiarity within their organizations.

Consistently, participants' ability to develop friendships with other members was hindered primarily by the presence of a language barrier. This finding echoes previous research, which has suggested that difficulty in acculturation is often a byproduct of linguistic differences (Mendez, Bauman, & Guillory, 2012; Singh, McBride, & Kak, 2015). One participant, Hana, explained that she "can't speak English very well, so it was difficult for [her] to make friends." Similarly, Yukina, who marched with two different Corps, recalled struggling her rookie year, saying that "I couldn't speak English at all . . . it was going to be so hard [to make friends] because I can't talk." Yukina even suggested that the language barrier "made me want to go back home" during her rookie year. Similarly, Niko, an alumnus of the Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps stated "no [it wasn't easy to make friends] because I didn't have any language."

While all participants were impacted by the presence of a language barrier, many also found making friends was possible due to the willingness of certain American members to help them overcome this barrier. Hana remembered her homestay family, explaining that "he [homestay brother] tried to help me in English, and I tried to understand his English." Hana later explained that she developed a close relationship with her homestay brother, and that he continued to help her with making "lots of friends" in the Corps. Similarly, Niko discussed the

support she gained from a fellow Japanese member, joking that “she helped me a lot [with learning English] but now . . . I think my English level is higher than her.” Hana and Niko both suggest that although language posed a significant barrier to developing friendships, they were able to overcome that barrier through the support of other members, whether American or Japanese.

Participants also noted that, despite a language barrier, they had the power to create friendships by teaching others Japanese. Himari, a member of the Colts and Phantom Regiment, explained that “I sometimes taught them my Japanese words, because I thought it would help to make stronger unity with other people.” Himari suggests that teaching her language to American students will help to bridge the gaps that may be created by her lack of English skills. By doing so, Himari focuses on self-directed solutions, rather than relying on American students to approach her first.

Another recurring narrative among participants was the story of their first American friend in the Corps. These narratives focused on how their first friend helped them to feel more included in the Corps. Hana mentioned her homestay family, explaining that her homestay brother “helped [her] so much” in finding other friends in the Corps, particularly “the mellophones,” the group of students who played the same instrument as her homestay brother. Because her homestay brother was already a member of that subgroup within the Corps, he helped Hana to find friends within that group.

While Niko largely felt like a fish out of water in her early years of Drum Corps, once she met an individual with whom she connected, she found it was easy to develop other friendships and to fit into the group. For example, Niko discussed her first American friend, saying that “he also joined . . . a vets group. So I would always join them when we have free

day.” By developing this initial friendship, Niko achieved entree into insular social circles within the Corps, even joining older and more experienced members in their small groups.

Himari also gained entree to the group via a veteran member. However, the relationship that gained her that access was mandated by the group. She explains that they had a “promsemble” rehearsal night, where rookie members would “partner with vets and make a friendship with them” as well as “best friends day.” While these organization-sponsored interactions were assigned by the section leaders, according to Himari, she still felt that she became friends with the members that she was paired with. These initial relationships helped Himari to feel more comfortable interacting with vets, saying that they were “helpful and supportive to include rookies” and that it made her feel “like part of the [Corps] and part of their color guard.”

Overall, participants expressed positive associations with the friends they made in DCI, and generally felt that they succeeded in developing friendships within their Corps. Despite the presence of language barriers, participants were able to form meaningful friendships with individuals, whether on their own or through organizational intervention, which led to feelings of inclusion and more positive experiences. Regardless of the methods used, participants expressed the importance of their friendships to their success, and many still maintain close friendships after they have left DCI. Yukina in particular said that Amanda, a good friend of hers from DCI, flew to Japan earlier this year to visit, highlighting the depth of the friendships formed between Japanese and American members during their time in DCI.

Acculturation. The second of Myers and Oetzel’s (2003) dimensions is acculturation, or “learning and accepting the culture” of an organization (p. 443). This dimension consists of how individuals learn the norms of the organization, how established mentors teach newcomers

organization norms, how individuals adapt to those norms, and how established members treat new individuals when norms are violated. Myers and Oetzel suggest that newcomers who break organizational norms are more likely to be less accepted by coworkers, leading to more acculturative stress, making acculturating and accepting the norms of an organization vital to organizational assimilation (p. 443).

As with familiarity, the primary limiting factor for participants in learning organizational norms was the omnipresent language barrier. As Niko explained, “the biggest part is language.” Other participants expressed similar sentiments through stories. For example, Himari remembered times when “staff would say ‘do that eight counts’ and I couldn’t understand that, so I would just keep going, and everybody was like ‘Himari, stop!’” In these situations, because Himari was not able to understand the instructions, she stuck out from the group in a negative way by violating established norms of rehearsal etiquette.

As Himari’s story illustrates, language barriers posed problems in Japanese participants’ attempts to acculturate within the Corps. To overcome these problems, participants use a combination of self-directed learning and learning from other members. Some participants, such as Niko, relied on a combination of both “[seeing the people] around me and doing what they are doing” as well as having friends to explain organizational norms. In addition to watching and learning, Niko had a close friend who “sometimes told me ‘you cannot do this’ or ‘you should do this.’” However, Niko joked that “mostly, I’m just looking around.” Other participants relied only on friendships, such as Hana who learned from her section, saying that “the mellophones taught me how to do [rehearsal protocols] and details.” Conversely, Yukina states that she “liked learning to see,” further clarifying: “I’m learning like a baby because everyone does this thing . . . and I see this, and think ‘oh, it’s protocol.’”

Kaito expresses another way in which the language barrier limited Japanese students' ability to acculturate within the Corps. Although Kaito explains that he was successful in learning basic organizational norms through observation, he noted that more complex concepts such as the Corps' motto or the concept of their show escaped him. Traditionally, meetings are held to describe the show that students will be performing, but these meetings are held entirely in English and often cover very complex concepts such as capturing abstract concepts through performance. Therefore, the language barrier is significant in limiting Japanese students' ability to understand the concepts presented in these meetings.

The language barrier is not, however, the only obstacle keeping Japanese students from acculturating to DCI. Yukina, who is conducting her own research on the differences between Japanese and DCI culture, explained that the greatest obstacle to acculturation was that "the student and teacher are so close." She explains that in Japan, "[teachers and students are] always separate . . . teachers teach and student is still student . . . so we are not friendly . . . but in the USA it's always mixed and friendly." She gives an example of when she "was surprised because the techs [instructors on the field] gave me a snack [during rehearsal]." Because Yukina's experience in Japanese culture was to maintain a respectful distance between herself and her instructors, she struggled to understand the culture of her Corps, in which staff members and students are often friends and maintain a very relaxed atmosphere, even compared to the average American teacher-student relationship. This sentiment supports existing research, which has shown Japanese students in unfamiliar settings are likely to perceive a high power distance between themselves and their instructors (Walkinshaw, 2007). Yukina's experience suggests that this perception exists even when the power distance is lowered by instructors.

Other barriers arose because of the difference in performance schedules and difficulty between DCJ and DCI. Himari stated “rehearsal was more tough than I thought” explaining that before DCI “I didn’t spin my flag over 100 times, but at Colts, we did 1000 times.” Reo agreed, saying “DCI was much harder than the Japanese one . . . I mean the schedule.” Despite being surprised by the difference, participants had a positive view of this increased difficulty, seeing it largely as an opportunity to “improve [their] technique or skill.” In fact, Himari even expressed that the difficult rehearsal schedule was “okay,” and that the style was “fun,” telling a story of a time when the color guard “had to spin 500 of something, and we would all say ‘halfway there!’ or ‘we only have 500 more!’ then everybody laughed.”

Certainly, these individuals learned and adapted to organizational norms. Himari, after sharing her early memories of accidentally performing for too long because she could not understand the staff’s English, joked about using her newcomer status to her advantage. She recalled that “sometimes color guard needed to run or do push-ups for punishment, like they missed the staff’s instructions. But staff said ‘Himari, did you understand our instruction?’ And I said ‘I’m sorry, I couldn’t hear you or I couldn’t understand in your English I’m sorry.’ So they wouldn’t give us a punishment.”

In summary, although cultural differences between Japan and the United States; as well as differences between DCJ and DCI; can cause a sense of dissonance for Japanese students, these students are driven by a desire to acculturate and to learn about the culture of the US and of DCI. Guided by this interest and self-direction, participants articulated very few signs of acculturative stress, rather choosing to view moments of acculturative difficulty as challenges to be overcome and not as embarrassing missteps.

Recognition. The third of Myers and Oetzel's (2003) dimensions is recognition, which refers to the importance of being recognized as valuable by both superiors and coworkers, and gaining recognition for both personal and professional contributions to the organization. Situations where an individual is able to help the organization in a unique way or when a coworker acknowledges their contributions help with the assimilation process, and often mark turning points when an individual moves from uncertainty of the organization to a place of comfort and a sense of belonging. Participants expressed that both positive and negative recognition from both students and staff members influenced their acculturative experiences in DCI.

Participants shared explicit stories of times when they felt valued by their Corps or felt recognized for their contributions. These stories were usually examples of times when staff members would compliment them for their performance. For example, Kaito recalled a time when "staff said [his] jazz run is . . . very beautiful" and expressed that he "got so happy" when given that compliment. Similarly, Yukina remembered feeling valued when her caption head, (the staff member in charge of a particular section, in this case the color guard), explicitly told her "Yukina, you are so good." Yukina also expressed that being chosen for a dance solo made her feel included in the Corps.

Others mentioned that they received negative feedback, but categorized it as an inevitable part of a competitive activity. Himari remembered when her section would "give advice to each other" and recalled that sometimes "one person would give me a really negative thing." However, Himari did not interpret these comments in a way that impacted her sense of organizational recognition. Rather, she believes that "it is our job to perform, so it's okay [to get negative comments]." Unlike other participants who believed that compliments or solos highlighted their personal contribution to the Corps, Himari expressed a belief that "all members

have a job in Drum Corps . . . I need to perform for the organization and and the organization needs us as a performer.” This collectivist approach reflects traditional notions of Japanese culture by highlighting the shared responsibility to uphold the group, rather than seeking individual compliments on performance (Yamagishi, Jin, & Miller, 1998).

Some received positive feedback from staff and took that feedback as representative of their own value within the Corps, and others viewed negative feedback in stride. However, others commented on how a lack of *any* recognition affected their sense of belonging within their Corps. For example, Niko focused on the responses of her peers, whom she felt did not acknowledge her individual success sincerely, if at all. Despite being chosen for a solo in 2013, she felt that “nobody cared” to acknowledge her success as an individual. “I don’t know [if people were happy for me]. Most people were like ‘yay’ but . . . [Corps] like doesn’t care.”

Changes in staff were also influential to the sense of belonging and recognition among participants. Niko explained that “first three years was the same caption head, and he really likes me, so I feel like they need me, but [during my] last year, the caption head changed, and they didn’t care about me.” Myers and Oetzel (2003) would suggest that a four-year veteran of an Corps, such as Niko in her last year, would not struggle with a sense of belonging. Considering that she has four years of experience in the Corps, one would expect her to be comfortably settled into her role. However, this major change of a single staff member led Niko to feel discluded and unrecognized in her final year, reflecting the impact of staff members on members’ experiences.

To summarize, participants derived a sense of belonging from both positive and negative recognition. When given positive comments, individuals were excited to be recognized for their contributions. However, when participants heard negative comments about themselves, they did

not internalize those comments, but rather considered that their collective job as members of the Corps was more important than individual recognition. This unique mixture of seeking individual recognition while still respecting the collective goal is representative of a cultural shift noted by Hamamura (2012). Hamamura argued that collectivist cultures are slowly becoming more individualistic, and that individual cultures are becoming more collectivist, with all cultures moving slowly toward a modern centrist culture where individual achievements are acknowledged, but the group dynamic is still respected and prioritized. In all cases, some recognition was better than no recognition, as participants were able to navigate negative recognition in a way that helped their organizational assimilation and encouraged them to improve their performances. However, as Niko expressed, receiving minimal or no recognition caused her to feel as though “nobody cared” about her and her success in 2014, despite being a well-acclimated veteran of the Corps by that time. Niko’s story highlights the importance of any recognition for Japanese students to see that their efforts are being recognized and acknowledged.

Involvement. As mentioned in the review of literature, the fourth dimension of Myers and Oetzel’s (2003) work, involvement, is difficult for me to apply to Drum Corps. Involvement refers specifically to the ways that individuals choose to go above and beyond the expectations and duties of their jobs, and overachieve for their given position. Because DCI is a full-time experience, with students living at their Corps sites, rehearsing from sunrise to sunset, and being provided explicit roles to fulfill with a strict hierarchy, it’s difficult to find instances of involvement in Drum Corps. Students do not work overtime or take on extra jobs, two of the primary indicators of involvement proposed by Myers and Oetzel, because the schedule and expectations of a DCI group are already so strict. For example, At Yukina’s Corps, the color

guard wakes up earlier than the rest of the members and rehearses before breakfast each day, and they are expected to stay for five to ten minutes after rehearsal to practice on their own. While time spent practicing before and after rehearsal may seem at first like an instance of involvement, this overtime work is simply an expectation of the organizational culture of some DCI groups.

Job Competency. The fifth dimension of organizational assimilation suggested by Myers and Oetzel (2003) is competency, or the extent to which an individual feels that they are successful at their job. Competency includes both knowing how to do one's job and feeling capable of performing the tasks required by the job. An individual's sense of competency is derived both from a personal sense of accomplishment and from the feeling that coworkers believe the individual to be competent.

Participants showed a sense of discomfort when asked about their performance and their skill as performers. In response to this discomfort, most participants downplayed their own success, such as Yukari, who despite being a dance soloist in 2013, noted first that she is "not very good at rifle and sabre" before conceding "but I really like dance." Even in this concession, Yukari did not state that she was skilled at dance; only that she liked dance. When discussing skill, Yukari spoke to a cultural phenomenon, explaining that "Japanese can make more beautiful [dance] than American people . . . American dancing is really powerful . . . but I can do beautiful." This response is replete with evidence of a cultural tendency on the part of many Japanese individuals to downplay individual success and focus on the positive qualities of the group (Yamagishi, Jin, & Miller, 1998). Rather than mentioning her dance solo, Yukari chose to focus on the beauty of Japanese dancers and to comment on how that compares to positive aspects of her American peers' dance.

Similarly, Yukina explained that she never felt like a great performer while she was marching because she “was always comparing herself to other good performers.” “Even now,” she joked, “I did three years of DCI and I am teaching and I still don’t think I’m good!” This tendency to compare oneself negatively to other performers rather than focusing on one’s own successes can also be attributed to the collectivist nature of Japanese culture. Culture tendencies to show more concern about the group than the individual translate to downplaying individual successes and comparing successes to other group members.

Participants maintained this focus on group dynamics when asked about their struggles in performance, as well. Himari remembered one particularly difficult section of her show in 2017, but noted that she felt “very comfortable struggling with something in Drum Corps” because “everyone is struggling . . . but we can all overcome this struggling and we can do it.” Reflecting on performance successes, Himari also draws from the group, remembering a part near the end of the show that “sometimes was not successful” but was “sometimes a good moment when we synchronized our flags.” Rather than recalling individual moments where her own performance fell short or excelled, Himari, like Yukina and Yukari, focuses on the successes and failures of the group, defining her own experiences by how well the group does or does not synchronize, both emotionally and in the physical performance.

Participants who did express individual feelings of competency almost always derived those feelings from external sources; primarily instructors. Kaito remembered a time when he was “very happy” because staff told him that his “jazz run is very beautiful,” and Reo remembered that his staff “really cared about him” and that made him feel valuable to the Corps. These interactions with staff, whether specific or more general, help students to feel that they are

competent and capable as individuals, rather than exclusively relating their experiences to the group dynamic.

Despite Japanese cultural norms of prioritizing group success over individual performance, participants still expressed that they enjoyed receiving individual compliments. Because of these cultural norms, however, participants did not generally articulate a sense of competency internally, as their focus was on the group dynamic. Instead, a sense of competency came from external sources, primarily staff members, who encouraged and complimented them. This highlights a specific space in which educators may be able to significantly influence organizational assimilation by Japanese members, building up their sense of competency through positive feedback.

Adaptation and Role Negotiation. The sixth and final dimension of organizational assimilation is adaptation or role negotiation. Myers and Oetzel (2003) explained that “role negotiation involves newcomers’ compromising between their expectations and expectations of the company, [while] adaptation suggests more compromise on the part of the newcomer” (p. 444). As individuals assimilate into an organization, they are faced with differences in expectations. Sometimes these differences come from a conflict between what one expects their role to be and what responsibilities they are assigned within that role. At other times, these conflicts are between the expectations of performance from other organization members and the expectations of fairness for the new member. An individual who faces minimal conflict between these expectations will have less trouble assimilating. However, for individuals who do face conflicts, the decision to adapt and methods by which they adapt impact the quality and ease of assimilation.

Participants expressed minimal conflicts of role negotiation, generally adopting a positive outlook on differences between their expectations and experiences in DCI. In general, participants expressed that DCI was more difficult than they had expected. Reo explained that “DCI was much harder than Japanese one” expressing difficulties with the strict and relentless schedule of the DCI tour. Despite this difficulty, Reo explained “I liked that difficulty . . . I went to DCI to improve my skills . . . so I liked the situation.” This sentiment was shared by participants like Himari, who despite observing that “rehearsal was more tough” than she expected, conceded that “it did not give me a negative impact.” Hana showed a similar grit, stating that rehearsal is “more hard and more difficult . . . but I thought ‘I can do that!’”

Out of Myers and Oetzel’s (2003) six dimensions of organizational assimilation, five dimensions were shown to influence Japanese students’ organizational assimilation into DCI. Familiarity was shown through participants’ willingness to develop meaningful friendships despite language barriers. Participants were also shown to be driven to acculturation; wanting to learn about the cultural differences between their own experiences and DCI. Recognition was of particular importance, as both positive and negative recognition were more influential in creating positive experiences for students than no recognition at all. Participants’ perceptions of their own competency was primarily drawn from external sources, highlighting the importance of educators in creating positive experiences for Japanese members of DCI. Finally, adaptation and role negotiation came more from internal sources, as participants showed their drive and determination to understand the differences between their expectations and reality, and to navigate those differences accordingly to create positive experiences for themselves.

RQ2

My second RQ asked “what communication strategies do Japanese students in DCI employ to help reduce acculturative stress?” As discussed in chapter two, acculturative stress, first defined by Oberg (1960), describes the personal stress, anxiety, or other negative impacts that arise when an individual is faced with an unfamiliar cultural situation. Generally, research has shown an inverse relationship between social support and acculturative stress (Ho, Schweitzer, & Khawaja, 2017), as well as between linguistic ability and acculturative stress (Lowinger, He, Lin, & Chang, 2014). The following sections highlight the pervasive influence of the language barrier and the importance of social support as the primary influential factors in acculturative stress. Within each of these sections, I look specifically at the strategies employed by Japanese students in DCI to reduce acculturative stress.

Linguistic Influences on Acculturative Stress. As discussed in my earlier analysis, participants believed that their ability to make friends was often hindered by their lack of linguistic skills. Although it is unclear from interviews if participants experienced an actual or perceived language barrier, as Cervantes and Cordova (2011) discovered, individuals who *perceived* that they had low language skills showed similar acculturative stress to individuals with *actual* low language skills. Thus, as long as participants express a belief that their linguistic skills are subpar, acculturative stress will follow.

To navigate this acculturative stress, many participants took a proactive approach to overcoming barriers. Yukina and Niko both expressed that they preferred to spend time around American members rather than Japanese members. This differs from the findings of previous research, which has found that Japanese students in America spend 82% of their social time with other Japanese students (Trice & Elliot, 1993, p. 1). As Yukina explained, she “wanted to speak

English more,” and sought to develop those skills through interactions with American members. For Niko, this preference for American friends was more related to the ephemeral nature of the activity. Because she felt that her time in DCI and in the United States was limited, she wanted to maximize her cultural immersion and language learning while she had the opportunity. For both Yukina and Niko, language barriers were a concern. However, they chose to overcome acculturative stress related to language by using their access to friendly English speakers as a means to immerse themselves further in the culture and to reduce linguistic barriers. As a result, both Yukina and Niko expressed minimal concerns when discussing acculturation, mirroring the research of Poyrazli et al. (2004), who argued that individuals who interact more with individuals of another culture will feel less acculturative stress. This experience also follows the research of Kormos et al. (2014), who explained that students with higher levels of cultural contact, such as the complete immersion experienced by students in DCI, will likely have higher language acquisition motivation. Ultimately, this creates a cycle in which students who are more driven to learn about culture and language while in the US are less likely to feel acculturative stress, leading to a higher likelihood of seeking more immersion in the culture.

Social Support and Acculturative Stress. Following in trends proposed by previous research (Ho et al. 2017; Khan Abrar uz Zama & Hasan, 2016; Ra & Trusty, 2017; Renner et al. 2012), participants who experienced high levels of social support did not express significant concerns with acculturative stress. Participants expressed feelings of social support from a number of sources, including other Japanese students, American students, and staff members.

A few participants expressed a sense of social support from other Japanese members, such as Hana, who – harkening back to linguistic influences on her experience – explained that although she “wanted to talk to American members more,” she “could not speak English very

very well” and therefore was “more close with Japanese people.” While these relationships did not help Hana to assimilate to the culture of the Corps, it did help to reduce her acculturative stress by providing a group of friends who “helped her” simply by being “so nice” to her.

However, as discussed in the previous section, it was more common for individuals to pursue relationships with American members as sources of social support. Participants’ descriptions of these relationships mirrored the social support described by Hana. For Niko, for example, having an American member as a friend helped her integrate into a “vets group” or a clique of veteran-only members. Niko explained that her best friend joined the group, therefore she could “always join the group when we had free days or meetings.” By developing a relationship with one American student, who acted as a guide, Niko was able to integrate into potentially insular communities.

According to Han et al. (2017), social support can also come from students’ relationships with their instructors. As noted earlier, participants expressed this sentiment when sharing positive experiences in which staff members complimented them. Yukina explained that her caption read “used me for the dance solo . . . that made me feel good.” Similarly, Kaito recalled when staff told him his “jazz run technique is perfect.” These instances of positive feedback helped participants to feel valued and worthy in their Corps. As Myers and Oetzel (2003) explained in their section on competency, individuals who perform at a higher level and are recognized for their performance are most likely to integrate successfully into organizational culture. Receiving positive social support and feedback from instructors reinforces students in the belief that they are high-performing members of the Corps. Ultimately, this may reduce acculturative stress brought on by feelings of uncertainty or inferiority.

In summary, the findings of RQ2 mirror existing research on acculturative stress, which finds that language and social support are chiefly responsible for influencing levels of acculturative stress. What is unique to these participants, however, is that Japanese students in DCI tend to seek out social support themselves, and tend to take a self-directed approach to reducing language barriers. While the above-cited research suggested that individuals experiencing language barriers are likely to insulate, and only participate with individuals from their culture, the participants I interviewed instead chose to find ways to work around these barriers, developing meaningful friendships and reducing acculturative stress through self-directed action. This is not to say that students should be solely responsible for their own acculturation, however. Participants consistently noted that help from individual American students or from the Corps aided them in developing these relationships and overcoming acculturative stress, placing the onus on the participants, their American peers, and the Corps themselves.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the dimensions of organizational communication that influence Japanese students' experiences in DCI, and to explore the communication strategies that students use to overcome acculturative stress. In the following chapter, I will summarize the findings of my two RQs, discuss potential implications of this research, and acknowledge both the strengths and limitations of this study before finally discussing future directions for research related to this work.

Summary of Findings

In this study, I asked two RQs regarding the influence of communication on Japanese students' experiences in DCI. First, using the work of Myers and Oetzel (2003) as a theoretical framework, I asked "what organizational communication factors influence the experiences of Japanese students in DCI?" Through my research, I found that Japanese students in DCI were influenced by five of the six factors of organizational communication presented by Myers and Oetzel. These included familiarity, acculturation, recognition, competency, and adaptation/role negotiation. The ways in which these factors were discussed by participants were consistent with Myers and Oetzel's existing research. As described in chapters three and four, the sixth factor, involvement, was left out because the nature of DCI's organizational culture does not align with this factor.

Familiarity with Others. Familiarity refers to the ways that new members of an organization – in this case Japanese students – adapt to their organization by making friends and developing relationships with their coworkers. Although participants expressed that they often struggled to develop relationships with their peers due to language barriers, participants also acknowledged that they were able to overcome these language barriers both through their own

actions (teaching Japanese to other members and asking for help with confusing concepts) as well as through organizational intervention (designated leadership and assigned friendship pairs). These findings mirror Myers and Oetzel's (2003) research, which called familiarity the "first step in fitting into organizations" (p. 443). Additionally, this work expands on their research by exploring the differences between individual methods of developing familiarity and institutionally mandated methods.

Acculturation. Myers and Oetzel's (2003) second factor of organizational communication, acculturation, also impacted participants in a way that mirrored existing research. Myers and Oetzel suggested that acculturation, or learning and accepting the norms of an organization, is vital to organizational assimilation. As such, individuals who learn these organizational norms and adapt to them are more likely to feel included in an organization, and less likely to experience acculturative stress. This is echoed in the findings of this study, where – despite expressing some dissonance between Japanese cultural norms and the organizational norms of DCI – participants were eager to learn about these differences and to adapt to the organization's expectations of them. In turn, this reduced acculturative stress and improved their experiences as members of their organizations.

Recognition. The third factor of organizational assimilation, recognition, addresses the impact of coworkers and supervisors on an individual's assimilation experiences. Specifically, Myers and Oetzel (2003) argued that individuals who are recognized as a valuable member of the organization by their peers and/or supervisors are more likely to express positive experiences with organization assimilation. In this study, I found that all participants had specific memories of times when their peers or instructors acknowledged their hard work, and that these experiences made them feel positive about their role within the Corps, reducing acculturative

stress. However, contrary to Myers and Oetzel's (2003) research, I also found that participants had positive experiences with negative recognition. When participants' peers or instructors would give negative feedback, participants were willing to take this feedback in a constructive way, which helped them to improve their own performance, and to feel more successful as they navigated organizational assimilation. Therefore, *any* recognition, whether positive or negative, was a positive influence on participants' sense of belonging within the Corps. Finally, one participant discussed the negative impacts of receiving zero recognition from peers, suggesting that negative recognition is preferred over no recognition at all.

Job Competency. Myers and Oetzel's (2003) fifth factor, competency, is distinct from recognition in that competency is an internal feeling of success at one's position. While recognition is concerned with how compliments from peers or superiors affect one's organizational assimilation experience, competency refers to one's own belief that they are good at their job, and contributing positively to the organization through their performance. Although most participants expressed some discomfort with discussing their personal competency, likely due to Japanese cultural norms of collectivism and humility (Yamagishi, Jin, & Miller, 1998), the relationship between participants' sense of competency and positive organizational assimilation experiences aligned with expectations set by Myers and Oetzel (2003), who argued that if an individual believes they are good at their job, the individual will experience less acculturative stress and a more positive organizational assimilation experience.

Adaptation/Role Negotiation. The final factor of organizational assimilation discussed in Myers and Oetzel's (2003) work is adaptation or role negotiation. This factor refers to the ways in which organizational members navigate inconsistencies between their expectations of an organization and the reality they experience. Specifically, Myers and Oetzel suggested that

organizational assimilation experiences are influenced both by the amount of role negotiation required (i.e., those who have less difference between expectation and reality will have a more positive assimilation experience) as well as an individual's willingness to adapt to differences (i.e., those more willing to adapt will have more positive assimilation experiences). Consistent with Myers and Oetzel's work, participants in this study experienced less acculturative stress because of a willingness to adapt to differences between their expectations and the reality of their organizations. Although participants expressed that these differences were present, they treated these differences as positive opportunities to learn and grow as performers and organizational members, rather than as negative experiences.

In addition to exploring which communication factors influence Japanese students' experiences in DCI, my second RQ asked "what communication strategies do Japanese students in DCI employ to help reduce acculturative stress?" Similar to RQ1, the findings of RQ2 mirrored existing acculturation research. Particularly, I found that the major factors influencing Japanese students' acculturative stress were language barriers and social support. While both of these factors were mitigated in part through actions by participants' peers and instructors, the participants themselves also employed communication strategies to mitigate these acculturative stressors.

Regarding language barriers, participants expressed that the language barrier influenced their ability to develop friendships (familiarity) and to understand organizational norms (acculturation). This aligns with the findings of previous research, which has suggested that there is a link between linguistic ability and levels of acculturative stress (Cervantes & Cordova, 2011; Diwan, 2008; Gallagher, 2013; Lowinger, He, Lin, & Chang, 2014). Moreover, a number of these studies argued that perceived linguistic ability contributes to acculturative stress equally to

actual linguistic ability. However, participants in this study also deviated from the findings of previous research in that participants often found ways to break down language barriers themselves, using the barrier as a means of initiating conversations with other members. By recognizing the limitations imposed on them by language barriers, participants were able to approach their American peers in a way that played off of the language barrier, either asking for help with their English or offering to teach basic Japanese to their peers. Through these interactions, differences in language functioned as a conversation starter, rather than a barrier to conversation, allowing participants to reduce acculturative stress by developing positive friendships within their Corps.

Although participants struggled to understand cultural norms at first, many of them expressed that having a helpful American student guide them through these norms was paramount to their success in organizational assimilation. By taking steps to initiate social support with their American peers, participants mitigated the potential acculturative stress caused by misunderstanding organizational norms. Similar to participants' relationships with linguistic ability, this relationship with social support also aligns with existing research on acculturative stress, which has suggested that social support is one of the most important factors in reducing acculturative stress (Ho, Schweitzer, & Khawaja, 2017; Khan Abrar uz Zama & Hasan, 2016; Ra & Trusty, 2017; Renner, Laireiter, & Maier, 2012).

Implications

In light of my findings, I will outline pragmatic recommendations that American participants and educators in DCI can take to help facilitate positive experiences for Japanese students in the activity. These recommendations are outlined by looking at language learning, cultural learning, and the influence of social support on these processes.

Language. Across all of the interviews, the most consistent theme was the issue of the language barrier in limiting Japanese students' participation. Whether language was keeping participants from easily developing friendships or from learning organizational norms, the shadow of language issues was omnipresent. Yukina provided insight to a potential solution to this issue, explaining that she would not want to have a translator on staff, but rather that "we want to go to other country to learn [their] language . . ." Specifically, Yukina suggested that staff and students should integrate some Japanese with "baby English" and "sign language" to express concepts. For example, American students tend to use tools such as google translate to create rough ideas of Japanese sentences when trying to share information with their Japanese peers. An alternative method would involve American students taking the time to explain concepts slowly and deliberately in English, using small words and shorter sentences. This gives an opportunity for Japanese students to receive the necessary information while also developing basic English skills. Additionally, Yukina's suggestion that American students and staff use "sign language" aligns with the educational concept of Total Physical Response (TPR), which suggests that second language learners understand concepts more quickly and effectively when language learning is combined with an illustrator/physical action, such as pointing when saying "left" or showing two fingers for the number "two" (Al Harrasi, 2014). Yukina expressed that learning English concepts "takes time" and that above all else, Japanese individuals need patience from their peers and staff members to overcome language barriers. I found this suggestion unexpected, as I would have assumed that having a translator would fix most of the issues of language barriers in the activity. However, Yukina suggests that Japanese individuals would rather be taught English than spoon-fed directions in Japanese. Sometimes they may need a bit of time, a bit slower rate of speech, or even some body language to help them understand,

but ultimately their goal is to learn as much of the language as possible, and our position as students and especially as educators should be to help facilitate English language learning amongst Japanese students.

In order to encourage English language development in Japanese members, educators can incorporate the aforementioned TPR method into their everyday teaching, helping Japanese students to learn words and concepts in the course of the regular rehearsal schedule. While this method may briefly slow down the rehearsal process as educators speak slowly to Japanese students, the potential time gained from not repeating comments as well as the pedagogical benefits for Japanese students are likely to outweigh the cost of rehearsal time. American students can help Japanese members by taking the time to work with them after rehearsal on basic English concepts, or by helping to explain concepts individually that may be difficult for a staff member to navigate during rehearsal. Since students spend a significant amount of time together during regular rehearsal time, a brief discussion at the end of the day to recap and answer any questions that a Japanese student may have could prove invaluable to solidifying concepts and helping in language retention. Such discussions also benefit American participants, who can hone their own intercultural communication skills.

In addition to incorporating TPR into everyday rehearsal, staff members should be cognizant of times when a student may be struggling to understand protocol or organizational norms and take the time to explain these organizational norms to that student. Because of the insular nature of the activity, staff members often assume that students have already heard the norms, and therefore should perform accordingly. However, nearly all participants in this study discussed a transitionary period in which they attempted to learn rehearsal protocol simply by watching and learning what was happening around them, leading to mistakes, frustration, and

ultimately a lower-quality rehearsal. Specifically, Kaito and Yukina both indicated that while they could understand comments from staff members about performance, they struggled to understand broader concepts about their shows and their organizational history, which is often presented to the group through a public meeting, conducted in English. Although Yukina previously suggested that Japanese students do not want to have concepts translated to Japanese, as they would rather be challenged by learning English, more complex ideas such as the design of the show or the expectations for rehearsal protocol may be more accessible to Japanese members if made available in Japanese. By taking the time to create Japanese-language translations of these more complex types of information, Corps can encourage full and equal participation by international students despite language barriers. To accomplish this, staff members could benefit from creating a “new member packet” for Japanese students, which explains important “invisible” information such as rehearsal protocol, acronyms, organization-specific terminology, and organizational norms in Japanese, so that Japanese students come to their Corps already armed with a general understanding of organizational norms. With these concepts already in mind, Japanese students can focus more on rehearsing, developing performance skills, creating friendships, and improving their English, rather than worrying about understanding complex concepts like show design and rehearsal protocol.

Information presented in “new member packets” should also include Japanese language versions of important procedural information to prevent mishaps, such as one I recall from earlier this summer when I worked on the administrative team for Phantom Regiment. In this case, seven Japanese students all arrived in the U.S. without a physical examination on file. It was not until they moved in with the Corps for the Summer, almost a month after arriving in the U.S., that they understood what the new member forms meant by requiring a “physical.” Because

of this, all seven Japanese members had to miss a day of rehearsal while they went to the doctor, which caused more organizational strain and limited the students' time interacting with the Corps during important formative rehearsals. By creating an easily accessible Japanese language section on each Corps' website where Japanese members can find all of the necessary information to audition and participate in the activity, Japanese participation will inevitably be encouraged and student experiences will likely improve. Indeed, other Corps would do well to follow the example set by Pacific Crest, has already integrated a Japanese section into their website which includes audition information, FAQs, information on obtaining a VISA, instructions for homestays, and other vital information for Japanese members. Even though, the rest of DCI's member Corps have not taken this step, these initial forms and information are necessary for students to navigate the audition process while still living in Japan, so that they come to the U.S. prepared to grow and learn, rather than worrying about completing bureaucratic processes.

Culture Learning. In addition to attending more carefully to how language can be used to improve Japanese students' success, it is equally important that American members and staff take steps to encourage positive cultural experiences for Japanese members. As Kudo and Simkin (2003) suggested, developing intercultural friendships is a vital part of the acculturation experience for Japanese students, and participating in these friendships can prove mutually beneficial, improving language skills and emotional positivity for both Japanese and American participants. Often, the language barrier creates a perceived separation between Japanese and American members, or individuals may see a Japanese member interacting with another American student and assume that they don't need any more help. However, American students should reframe their mentality from only interacting with Japanese students when those students

“need help,” instead trying to develop meaningful relationships with these members despite cultural barriers. As Yukina explained, when members did do this, they became extremely close friends, such as her friendship with a member who still visits her in Japan often.

Regarding staff members, this study suggests that positive comments from staff can go a long way in developing positive associations between Japanese members and the organizational culture of DCI. However, it is concerning that no participants shared a story of a time when a staff member helped them to understand specifically rehearsal culture or organizational norms. Staff members should continue to provide instructional feedback, but consider using their position to facilitate cultural learning as well.

Finally, for the Corps themselves, creating mandated friendship days or pairings can become the all-important first step that creates a positive experience for a student. As Himari recalled, having an Corps-mandated “best friend day” helped her to overcome fears of making friends, and by making that first friend, Himari was able to gain entree into the Corps, ultimately helping her to have a positive experience. Mentorship programs which pair a veteran member with one or more rookie members may have a similar effect, giving students a contact within the Corps who can help them learn cultural norms and enter into cultural in-groups which may otherwise seem inaccessible. To this end, individual Corps may consider a brief orientation for American students, either performed as a meeting early in the Summer or through an informational packet, which stresses the importance of building cultural connections with their Japanese peers, focusing on the benefits of doing so for both Japanese and American members, as well as the Corps as a whole.

Strengths

The strengths of this study lie largely in the ways that it contributes to existing research on DCI, Myers and Oetzel's (2003) research on organizational assimilation, and acculturation at large. As discussed in the literature review, there is minimal research on DCI. Moreover, what little research exists on DCI does not specifically address Japanese students' experiences within the activity. By researching Japanese students specifically, this study helps create a better understanding of these students' experiences and needs, allowing educators to better accommodate those needs.

Additionally, no research has utilized Myers and Oetzel's factors of organizational assimilation to understand an educational organization. By applying these factors to an educational organization, this study expands the use of Myers and Oetzel's work into more diverse contexts. By doing so, this work suggests similarities between workplace environments and the educational environment of Corps within DCI. This may inform future research as well as educators' understanding of the organizational dynamics of DCI's member Corps.

Furthermore, Myers and Oetzel's work was created to help us understand how individuals from a like culture (i.e., an American joining an American workplace) navigate organizational assimilation. The current study expands the scope of Myers and Oetzel's research by applying these concepts to organizational assimilation by individuals who are simultaneously navigating acculturation in an unfamiliar geographic region. By applying Myers and Oetzel's model to this new context, this work suggests that there are similarities between intercultural and intracultural organizational assimilation. Therefore, educators and future researchers may consider looking specifically at the organizational assimilation and acculturative stresses faced by American students in DCI, who likely also follow Myers and Oetzel's model.

Finally, by exploring the similarities between organizational assimilation and acculturation in general, as well as observing how acculturation takes place within a specific organizational context, this study helps to expand to the existing body of acculturation research, which generally focuses on acculturation among immigrants or in traditional academic settings. In recent years, the study of acculturation has focused on expanding to new contexts. This study follows in that trend and contributes a new perspective to the acculturation research canon.

Limitations

As with all research, there are a number of limitations to this work. Primarily, although my initial demographic survey received over 200 responses, I was only able to get six interviews from those responses. This drastic difference in responses was largely due to the question “are you comfortable participating in an interview conducted in English?” While a number of Japanese participants in DCI were willing to help with the study, participation in interviews was reduced because participants were uncomfortable speaking in English, and my own Japanese speaking skills were insufficient to conduct the interviews in Japanese. Additionally, it is reasonable to believe that my results may have been skewed by only interviewing individuals with confidence in their English skills. By only speaking to individuals with a certain level of English knowledge, the impact of the language barrier may have been understated compared to the average Japanese member of DCI.

Moreover, I did not use observation as a method for this study. Although I had originally planned to couple my interviews with an observation period, I was unable to perform observation due to time and financial constraints. Because of this, I was unable to *see* how participants navigated relationships in DCI. Being able to observe these relationships and to compare observed experiences with reported experiences would have potentially provided greater insight

to the ways that Japanese students in DCI work through acculturative issues. Without observation, however, this study relied exclusively on retellings of student experiences. This is particularly apt because in my time as a member of DCI, I often found that my interactions with Japanese students differed from their retellings, leading me to believe that there may be some inconsistencies between participants' lived experiences and interviews.

Moreover, there is a recognizable difference in depth of responses from RQ1 to RQ2. I believe that this limitation is due to a sense of discomfort from the participants. Although a number of questions in the interview protocol were geared towards acknowledging RQ2, participants seemed less comfortable responding to those questions. For example, when asked to recall a time when they may have struggled in rehearsal, most participants opted out of the question. This discomfort may be cultural, or due to perceived power distance between myself as a researcher and the participants as students. Notably, the two participants who did respond thoroughly to these questions were individuals with whom I had a previous relationship through DCI, suggesting that perceived power distance may have been the cause of this discomfort, as individuals who did not perceive a power distance between us were comfortable responding.

Finally, the aforementioned relationship with two of my participants may have impacted the quality of data I was able to gather. Two of my participants were members of the Drum and Bugle Corps with which I marched at the same time that I was a member. While our relationship was not particularly close compared to other members, their knowledge of me as a coworker rather than as a researcher may have impacted their comfort in answering certain questions. Notably, these two participants provided far more thorough responses than the others. However, these individuals also had the strongest English ability amongst the participants, so it is possible that both our personal relationship as well as linguistic ability influenced these responses.

Future Directions

This study provides a number of opportunities for future research.

First, regarding the aforementioned issues with sampling in this study, I believe that future research would benefit from speaking to a larger number of participants from more diverse backgrounds. Conducting interviews in Japanese and translating to English would allow for more varied participant experiences in critical areas of organizational assimilation, including a more thorough understanding of the impact of language barriers on participants' experiences. Conducting interviews in Japanese would also allow for younger members of DCI to participate, as those members tend to have less-developed English skills and therefore may be unable to participate in English interviews. Further, future research could benefit from comparing participants' interview responses with observation, giving a more thorough understanding of how the communication strategies employed by participants may play out in real-world situations.

Although I expected language to play a role in the study, I was not prepared for the overwhelming influence that language had on nearly all aspects of organizational assimilation. Further research in this context would benefit by focusing on language in an even deeper way. In particular, future research dedicated to understanding the role of language barriers could better serve participants by understanding the varied ways in which language permeates their experiences in DCI.

Finally, future research may benefit from comparing the organizational assimilation of American students to that of Japanese students. Because no research has been done on the experiences of American students in DCI, there is not a benchmark by which we can measure how Japanese students' experiences may differ from their American peers. However, every participant in DCI inevitably goes through organizational assimilation during their early years.

This past summer, my partner, who also marched with the Phantom Regiment, visited her family in Japan. Of her 14 days in Japan, 10 days were spent with friends that she had made through her time in DCI. In the years since leaving DCI, we have had five Japanese exchange students stay with us as they begin their journey in the activity. Other friends of mine have taken jobs in Japan, visited to see old DCI friends, or had Japanese DCI friends fly to the U.S. to visit them. Although the logistical, linguistic, and acculturative challenges of coming to the U.S. for a summer are massive, the bonds that Japanese students form with their American peers are deep. These relationships have become some of the most important in my life. I hope that this research can help others to seek those same bonds.

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Endnotes

1. Drum and Bugle Corps is the spelling for both singular and plural forms. The term is derived from the word “corps,” defined as “a group of persons associated together or acting under common direction (i.e., The Marine Corps) (Merriam-Webster, 2017).
2. While there are two other articles in scholarly publications that reference DCI, these articles are not scholarly works of research, but rather business notes from MENC: The National Association for Music Education, reprinted in the Music Educator’s Journal.
3. While the authors do note that rules are set both formally and informally, they use the term informally to reference a set of rules that are created “through audience insistence” (p. 9) as opposed to the formal rules which are “read off of a sheet of paper” (p. 9). In this paragraph, I reference formal and informal as specific categories described by Khan (1992).
4. While “cultural contact” would be the grammatically correct form, Graves (1967) specifically uses the term “culture contact.” Therefore, the terminology herein will reflect the language of existing research.
5. Participants’ perceived language skill level was based on the guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. More detailed information may be found on the organization’s website, www.actfl.org
6. During the summer DCI tour, members run on an extremely rigid schedule, waking up together around 7 a.m. and rehearsing or travelling all day with short lunch and dinner breaks. Each member is provided with a job to help with logistics, which can include everything from painting rehearsal fields to cleaning up after meals. Because members follow such a uniform schedule and fulfill strict roles, it would have been difficult to address extracurricular involvement as an acculturation factor within DCI.

Appendix A

Recruitment Letter (Directors)

Dear (name of director), (name of organization):

My name is Keegan Bosch, and I am a graduate student in the Communication Studies department at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. I am also an alumnus of Drum Corps International, having performed with Pioneer in 2013 and the Phantom Regiment from 2014-2016. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research for a thesis on the experiences of Japanese students in Drum Corps International. I am contacting you to request your organization's participation in this study.

This research will look specifically at the ways that Japanese students adapt to both the culture of the United States and to the culture of Drum Corps International. These data will be collected through a series of interviews, both online and face-to-face.

If you could, please forward the attached recruitment email to your current or past Japanese students. This will give students the opportunity to contact me if they are interested in participating, and allows me to conduct interviews through electronic means.

If your organization is able to participate in any capacity, or if you have any further questions, please contact me via email or at my personal number: (815) 685-4367. I look forward to being in touch with you, and thank you for your time.

Best,

Keegan D Bosch

Graduate Student, Ball State University

Alumnus, Pioneer Drum and Bugle Corps

Alumnus, Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter (Participants)

Dear (name of student),

Thank you for contacting me about my research on the experiences of Japanese students in Drum Corps International (DCI).

My name is Keegan Bosch, and I am a graduate student in the Communication Studies department at Ball State University of Muncie, Indiana. I am also an alumnus of Drum Corps International, having performed with Pioneer in 2013 and the Phantom Regiment from 2014-2016.

As you may know, my research will look specifically at the ways that Japanese students adapt to both the culture of the United States and to the culture of Drum Corps International. These data will be collected through a series of interviews, both online and face-to-face.

The following link will take you to a brief demographic survey. First, you will be asked to provide informed consent for this study. Then, the survey will ask for general information about you, your DCI experience, and your ability to participate in an interview. Please complete this survey promptly. After receiving your responses, I will contact you via email. If you meet the inclusion criteria as listed on the consent form, I will contact you to set up an initial interview. If you do not meet the inclusion criteria, I will contact you to thank you for your time and to let you know that you do not need to schedule an interview.

The demographic survey can be found at this link: (link here).

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Keegan D Bosch

Graduate Student, Ball State University

Alumnus, Phantom Regiment

Appendix C

Demographic Survey and Survey Consent

Welcome to the Demographic Survey for the Project:

"Cross-Cultural Experiences of Japanese Members in U.S.-Based Drum and Bugle Corps"

This project explores the experiences of both Japanese and US members of Drum Corps International (DCI). This project focuses on how Japanese members adapt to the culture of the United States and of DCI.

To be eligible for this study, you must be a current member or alumnus/alumna of one of the 49 member corps of Drum Corps International. You must be at least 18 years of age, a current resident of either the United States or Japan, and feel comfortable participating in an interview conducted in the English language.

This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. This survey is used to collect demographic information for the purposes of determining eligibility. Those who are eligible to participate in this study will be contacted via their provided e-mail address to set up an interview. No identifying information will be shared. Your name will not be collected with the information. The data will be stored indefinitely.

There are no perceived risks or direct benefits for participating in this survey. You are free to refuse to participate in this project or to withdraw from this project at any time by simply not completing the survey.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw permission at any time without reason or penalty from the researcher. You may ask questions of the researcher at any time during the process, even before signing this form.

Project Title: Cross-Cultural Experiences of Japanese Members in U.S.-Based Drum and Bugle Corps

For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN, 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu

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Consent: I certify that I have read the preceding, or it has been read to me, and that I understand its content. I acknowledge that it is my choice to answer this survey by clicking on the "Agree to Participate" button below and answering the survey questions.

I agree to participate (1)

I do not wish to participate. If you choose this option, please exit the survey now. (2)

Q1 What is your current age?

Q2 Which of the following best describes you?

American Citizen (1)

Japanese Citizen (2)

Other (please specify) (3) _____

Q3 What are your preferred gender pronouns?

He/Him (1)

She/Her (2)

They/Them (3)

Other (please specify) (4) _____

Q4 Please select your preferred racial identity.

Asian (1)

Black/African American (2)

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (3)

Native American/Alaskan Native (4)

Hispanic/Latino/a (5)

Other (6) _____

Q5 Are you a current member or Alumnus of a Drum Corps International member corps?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q6 Which of Drum Corps International's member corps have you performed with?

Q7 Please list any other organizations (WGI, DCJ, etc.) that you have been a member of.

Q8 Would you be willing to participate in an interview in English?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q9 What is your email address? (This address will be used to contact you only for this project, it will not be shared with any other individuals.)

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol - Japanese Students - Estimated Time 1-1.5 Hours

Interviewee: _____

Organization: _____

ID Number: _____

Pseudonym: _____

1. To make sure I have the right information . . .
 1. What is your name?
 2. What organization do you perform with?
 3. What instrument do you play?
2. Is this your first time in the United States?
 1. Tell me about the other times that you've visited the US.
 2. Have you visited other countries?
 3. Tell me about this experience compared to other visits (if applicable.)
3. Tell me about your experience in DCI overall.
 1. How did being in DCI differ from your expectations of the experience?
 2. How was your organization different than what you expected?
4. Did you participate in Drum Corps in Japan?
 1. Could you explain to me how that community is different than Drum Corps International?
5. I would like to talk about your relationships with other members in [organization name].
 1. Do you still have many friends from the organization?
 2. Think about your rookie year in particular; did you make friends easily?
 1. Can you think of a time when you either developed a friendship or struggled to make a friend?
 3. Were most of your friends also Japanese members?
 4. Think about people in the organization who may not have been your close friends. Did you still feel comfortable around these people?
 1. Can you think of a time you felt uncomfortable around another member? Tell me about that experience.
6. Now I would like to focus on the culture of Drum Corps International and of your organization.
 1. You mentioned earlier that the community is different from that of Drum Corps Japan. Did you find this transition difficult?

1. (If applicable) Can you tell me about a time when you struggled with this transition?
2. Let's talk about rehearsal protocol. What was the protocol like at your organization?
 1. How did you learn this rehearsal protocol and the expectations of the organization?
 1. Can you think of a specific time that somebody helped you understand how to rehearse?
3. Overall, did you feel like veteran members were willing to include you in the culture of the organization?
 1. Can you think of a time when somebody went out of their way to help include you in the organization when you may have been confused?
4. Considering all the protocol in DCI, can you think of a time when you accidentally broke these rules?
 1. Probe: how did you learn from that mistake?
7. Next, I want to focus on your experiences as a performer in DCI.
 1. Do you consider yourself a good player and marcher?
 2. When you were marching, did you feel like you were one of the best members, or did you feel like you struggled as a performer?
 1. Can you tell me about a time when you struggled with performance?
 2. Can you tell me about a time when you were successful in a performance?
 3. In general, do you feel that you were a valuable member of the organization?
 1. Did you feel this more personally, or because people made you feel valuable?
 1. If others, who made you feel like a valuable performer? Staff? Other members?
8. Lastly, I want to talk a bit more about your expectations of DCI and how they compared to your experience.
 1. You mentioned earlier that DCI (was/was not) different than you had expected. Can you tell me about a specific time when DCI didn't meet your expectations?
 1. Were you happy about this difference? If not, how did you deal with the difference?
 2. Overall, was your experience better or worse than you expected?
 3. Did you feel that there were ever unfair expectations from your instructors or other members?
 1. Can you tell me about a specific time you felt something unfair was expected of you? How did you fix this problem?
9. As you know, this interview will be confidential. Nobody but me will know your real identity. Do you have a preferred fake name?

Appendix E

Informed Consent (English)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study Title

Cross-Cultural Experiences of Japanese Members in U.S.-Based Drum and Bugle Corps

Study Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of Japanese students who travel to the United States to perform with competitive Drum and Bugle Corps. Findings from this research may lead to suggestions for the instructional staff and/or American members of these organizations on how to facilitate positive educational experiences for Japanese members, as well as aiding Japanese students in better understanding this unique environment.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

To be eligible for this study, you must be a current member or alumnus/alumna of one of the 49 member corps of Drum Corps International. You must be at least 18 years of age, a current resident of either the United States or Japan, and feel comfortable participating in an interview conducted in the English language.

Procedures and Duration

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing to participate in an interview conducted in the English language. In the interview, you will be asked broad questions about your experiences in Drum Corps International. Interviews will be conducted in person during the 2017 Drum Corps International season, or via skype/phone calls. Interviews will take approximately 45-90 minutes.

Audio Recording

Interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission. To ensure participants' identities are confidential, any names used in the interviews will be changed in transcriptions. Audio files will be kept on a password-protected computer.

Data Confidentiality

All data will remain confidential, available only to the members of the research team. No identifying information will appear in any publication or presentation of the research.

Storage of Data

Physical files will be kept in the researcher's home, in a drawer protected by lock and key. Electronic files will be kept on a password-protected computer. Audio recordings will be destroyed immediately after transcription is completed. Transcriptions will be retained indefinitely, with identifying information removed. Data will only be accessible by the research team.

Risks or Discomforts

There is a small risk that some of the questions asked in the interview may cause negative emotional responses (homesickness, nostalgia, anxiety, etc.) You may choose not to answer any question that causes discomfort, or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Benefits

By participating in this study, you may benefit through reflection on your experiences in Drum Corps International.

Compensation

There is no compensation offered for participation in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw permission at any time without reason or penalty from the researcher. You may ask questions of the researcher at any time during the process, even before signing this form.

IRB Contact Information

For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN, 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project titled, "Cross-Cultural Experiences of Japanese Members in U.S.-Based Drum and Bugle Corps." I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I may request a copy of this informed consent form for my files. To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation in this study, as described in this document.

Participant's Signature
Researcher Contact Information
Principal Investigator:
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Date
Faculty Supervisor:
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Appendix F

Informed Consent (Japanese)

同意書

研究タイトル

米国に拠点を置くドラム&ビューグルコーの日本人メンバーによる異文化体験

研究の目的および理論的根拠

本研究の目的は、米国に来て競争の激しいドラム&ビューグルコーの中でパフォーマンスを行う日本人学生の体験をよりよく理解することです。本研究結果は、各組織の指導スタッフやアメリカ人メンバーに向けた、日本人メンバーの教育体験を有意義なものにするための提案、また、日本人学生がこの独特な環境をよく理解できるように支援するための提案につながる可能性があります。

対象/除外基準

あなたが本研究の対象者となるためには、49 チームあるドラム・コー・インターナショナル(DCI)のいずれかのチームにおいて、現在または以前のメンバーである必要があります。さらに年齢が 18 歳以上で、現在、米国または日本の居住者であり、英語で行われる今回の面接に不自由なく参加できることが必要です。

手続きおよび期間

本研究に参加されると、簡単な統計調査(5~10 分間)とそれに続いて面接があります。面接では、ドラム・コー・インターナショナルでのご自身の経験について幅広い質問があります。面接は、2017 年のドラム・コー・インターナショナル シーズン中に直接行われるか、あるいはスカイプ/電話を介して実施されます。面接時間は約 45 分~90 分です。

音声の録音

面接は参加者の許可を得て録音されます。参加者の身元が必ず機密となるよう、面接で使用される名前は転写の際にすべて変更されます。音声ファイルは、パスワードで保護されたコンピューターに保存されます。

データの機密性

すべてのデータは機密保持され、本研究チームのメンバーのみが利用可能です。本研究の出版または発表に識別情報は表示されません。

データの保管

物理的なファイルは、研究員の家で施錠した引き出しに保管されます。電子ファイルは、パスワードで保護されたコンピューターに保存されます。音声の録音は転写が完了した時点で直ちに破棄されます。転写物は無期限に保持されますが、識別情報は削除されます。データは本研究チームによってのみアクセス可能です。

リスクまたは不快感

面接での質問の中には、感情的な反応(ホームシック、郷愁、不安など)を引き起こす可能性を持つものが多少あります。不快感を引き起こす質問への回答は回避することができ、また、いつでも本研究から撤退することができます。

メリット

本研究に参加することは、ドラム・コー・インターナショナルでのご自身の体験に対する考え方に役立つかもしれません。

報酬

本研究への参加に対して提供される報酬はありません。

自発的参加

本研究への参加は任意です。いつでも特別な理由がなく本研究から撤退することができ、また研究員からの撤退に対する罰則もありません。本研究を通していつでも、たとえ本同意書に署名する前であっても、研究員に質問をすることができます。

IRB(内部調査委員会)の連絡先情報

研究対象者としてのあなたの権利に関するご質問は、こちらまでお問い合わせください: Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN, 47306 (インディアナ州マンシー市 ボール州立大学研究公正局長), (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu

私、_____ は、本研究である「米国に拠点を置くドラム&ビューグルコーの日本人メンバーによる異文化体験」のプロジェクトへ参加することに同意します。本研究では詳細の説明がなされ、私の質問に対し満足のいく回答を受けました。私は本プロジェクトの説明を読んだ上で、参加することに同意します。私は自分用に本同意書のコピーを要求できることを理解しています。私は自分の知る限り、本書に記載の本研究に参加するための対象/除外基準を満たしています。

参加者の署名

日付

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